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An Army Camp Story

By E. E. Ryden, Camp Pastor.

If you were a preacher about to deliver a sermon before a thousand or more soldiers, and they greeted you with cheers and cries of "Hooray!" as you mounted the platform, just what would be your feelings? Well, that was my first experience in preaching to the New York National Guardsmen at a week night Y. M. C. A. meeting in Camp Wadsworth. At first it startled me, naturally. Thought I, this must be a political rally instead of a religious gathering.

But that's just the spirit of the boys here. They are such red-blooded Americans they don't know what to do with themselves. They want action. If they can't move, they must yell. And when you learn to know them, you know how to take them. A political rally reception will not bother you. Those same men are as susceptible to a heart-to-heart Gospel message as any congregation I ever faced, and when I began to speak to them, they were as reverent as saints and docile as children.

But you must give them a straight Gospel message. Oil and water don't mix. Neither do religion and frivolity. At least they fail to go together in the army. Some preachers and lectures coming to Camp Wadsworth have had experiences they will not soon forget. Some came here imbued with the idea that what the soldiers want is a lot of funny stories, and if they could slip in a little religion while the soldier wasn't looking, they felt that they were executing a clever flank movement. Now the soldier does like funny stories, but he wants them straight. And most of them are open to religious impressions, too, but it must come in a straight-from-the-shoulder, simple pure form.

The soldier is quick to recognize genuine religion. He will listen, too, when the message comes straight from the heart. I have seen the simplest Gospel sermon get a hearing, when a Hillis lecture has fallen flat.

It took Dr. Keeyer, of Utica, the "Fighting Chaplain," of the old First Cavalry, to drive this truth home at a recent meeting of Chaplains and Camp pastors, Major-General O'Ryan had called the conference to discuss the moral situation in the camp. All sorts of remedies were suggested and devised. Finally it came to Chaplain Keeyer's turn.

"Let me tell you, gentlemen," he snapped in his sharp, incisive way, "when you leave out more of the spirit of liberalism and get more of the spirit of true religion in your preaching to the men, you'll have better results. I heard a preacher the other day refer to Jehovah as the 'Tribal God of the Jews.' Is that all he was? If so, I want to remind you that He always 'licked the other gods.' Tell the men that the laws God has laid down are immutable, and if they don't obey them they must suffer for it. This is no place for a wishy-washy religion of your liberal sort."

When the Major-General spoke he warmly commended the words of the Chaplain.

"I think I caught your meaning, Chaplain," he said. "I have an instance in mind, where a chaplain was particularly popular among some of the men of his regiment. When I asked a soldier the reason

for it, I was told that the Chaplain in question was so 'Liberal.' 'We can swear right in front of our Chaplain, and he doesn't care.' Now I need not say that that is not the kind of liberalism we want in this Division. The best soldier is the soldier who has a religion, the soldier who obeys the laws of God."

I don't know when I have been so impressed with the truth of the General's statement as I was last Sunday night at our Soldiers' Service. We were to commemorate our Lord's death in holy sacrament, and my heart fairly sang with joy as I saw those boys come marching with soldiery tread to our little church in Spartanburg. It was a joy, too, to witness the reverence with which they entered the sacred courts of the Lord. The first lad who arrived marched to the very front seat. An object lesson thought I, for the good folks at home. And as he sat down, this soldier boy, he bent low in the most devout attitude of prayer. For many minutes he remained thus, and I knew that even though our preparatory service might not be as elaborate and liturgical as some of our brethren at home might desire, here was one boy, at least, who was fit and well prepared to receive the blessed body and blood of our Lord Jesus.

And as others came in, there was that same reverential spirit. "It does one's soul good," exclaimed a Y. M. C. A. secretary from Baltimore, "to get into the quiet, worshipful atmosphere of one of our churches."

It had been announced as a soldiers' communion service, and our little church was well-nigh filled with the men in olive drab. Twenty-four men lined up for the first table. I wish you could have seen them! As stalwart and manly and clean-looking a body of men as my eyes have ever looked upon. Any commander would have rejoiced to lead such a body of men. But what made my heart so glad was not only the fact that they were so physically fit, but because of the great desire that filled each one that he might be made spiritually fit. Here were real soldiers of the Cross, confessing the Lord Jesus before men. Here were soldiers ready, not only to fight the battles of the Republic, but also the battles of the Kingdom!

Then my thoughts went back, in the midst of the solemn rite, to a boy who tried to be a soldier without a religion. He is lying now in one of the wards of the camp hospital. A few months ago he was as clean, perhaps, as manly as any of those boys before me. But his path from home to camp, alas, took him through New York City, and there he made his first slip. Led by evil companions, he entered one of those vestibules of hell which our laws permit to flourish in the larger cities. I need not go into details, but the mark of the unmentionable plague was upon him, never to be removed in this life. "I never want to look my mother or my sisters in the face again," he told a Y. M. C. A. worker the other day. "Do you know what I would do if I were in your place," queried the Y. M. C. A. man, "I would go to France, sell my life as dearly as possible, and leave my body there." Not much comfort for a despairing boy, but that's

the spirit of the army, stern and unrelenting toward the transgressor. And the pity is there are many, many more in the same hopeless plight as this boy. The lad looked the Y. M. C. A. man in the face, while the tears gathered in his eyes. "That's just what I would like to do," he said, "but I'm no good as a soldier. They won't let me go." Ready to die for his country and not fit to do that!

And as I thought of his sad answer my eyes rested again on those reverent boys before me who were preparing themselves for battle by commemorating the Lord's death, and renewing their allegiance to Him.

"The best soldier," said Major-General O'Ryan, "is the soldier with a religion." Is it true?

Don't Shoot Pigeons.

Complaints have been made to the pigeon section of the Signal Corps that carrier pigeons of the racing-homer type, being trained throughout the United States for communication service with the American Army have been shot by persons on hunting expeditions.

Because of the important part carrier and homing pigeons are playing in the war, and the need for their breeding and development in his country, the War Department has considerably expanded the pigeon section of the Signal Corps. Homing pigeons constitute one of the most effective means of communication in the Army.

Any pigeon in the air must be a carrier pigeon flying from a loft under Government supervision. Its destruction may be a serious loss to the American Army. Anyone coming into possession of pigeons labeled "U. S. A.—18," indicating they are being trained for Army purposes, is requested to report the fact at once to the office of the Chief Signal Officer, Land Division, Washington, D. C.

May Kill Own Hens.

"Is there any law against my killing one of my own chickens and serving it for dinner tomorrow?"

This question was asked F. B. Mumford, federal food administrator for Missouri, recently. The housewife was told there is no law to prohibit one from killing one's own chickens or from buying one that has been killed.

"The ruling in regard to killing hens and pullets applies to licensed dealers in poultry," said Mr. Mumford. "This ruling was made in an effort to increase the supply of eggs. Every hen killed in the next two months means a loss to the nation of about thirty eggs."

Individual owners, however, are urged not to slaughter their hens before May 1. There is no law to prohibit it; it is a matter for one to settle with his own conscience, for by killing a hen he is disregarding a war measure. We hope every person will live up to the spirit of the regulation whether there is a or not.

"All the new rules and regulations are passed by the national Food Administration. They are not made as a result of some personal belief on my part as some persons who call up and object to certain ruling seem to believe. They apply to the entire nation, not only to this community. We are merely trying to carry out the rules of the Government."

A German newspaper says that Germany will hold out until the bitter end. Well, they know what kind of an end it will be anyway.

"The Seven Pearls"

EPISODE NO. 4.

Harry receives a telephone call from Kismet in the 4th chapter of the Pathe serial, "The Seven Pearls," to be shown at the Gem Theatre Monday, in which there is promised one of the greatest thrills ever seen on the screen.

"Ilma is in Mason's home. You'd better hurry! a voice tells him. Much excited, he tries to get more information, but Kismet hangs up, leaving Harry in the dark. Realizing Ilma's impending danger, Harry leaves immediately. Unfortunately, the machine breaks down and he is delayed. Harry arrives at Mason's home, only to see and hear the faint cry of the struggling Ilma, away up in the air. Harry shouts to Ilma and in response she calls back for help. Positive without a doubt that it is she, he runs off wondering what he can do to save her.

Kismet jumps out of a machine and leisurely starts to enter a drug store. As he does so, a large round shadow starts to pass over his head. Looking up, he sees the black sphere of the balloon and the limp figure of Ilma hanging from the rope. Hearing the noise of a machine he turns around and sees Harry leap from the car. Putting on a pair of glasses so as to disguise himself, Kismet goes up to Harry and lays his arm upon his shoulder. Harry impatiently waves him away. He replaces his arm and speaks: "Come with me. The police can't help you. They have no airships."

On the other side of the world the sun is shining. Ilma's father is still held a hostage until her return.

Terror-stricken, Ilma continues to fly through the air. The rope is very much blackened by the fast eating acid. The rope has been half severed. It is only a matter of minutes.

Kismet and Harry rush to see Capt. Baldwin, who owns a dirigible. Dressed in aviators' costumes, Harry and the Captain prepare to leave. The machine is in first class order, the instructions are given, they finally leave the earth in pursuit of Ilma.

Looking through air glasses Harry sees Ilma at a great distance from them, and spurs the Captain to speed the machine on. The Captain explains that they are moving at top speed and can go no faster. Harry calls Kismet's attention to Perry's home, which they are now passing. The noise of their machine arouses Perry and his servant. Becoming suspicious, Perry launches his hydro-aeroplane and starts after the dirigible.

The swifter hydroplane passes the dirigible at daylight and reaches the balloon where Ilma is hanging by a few shreds of the acid-eaten rope. Perry steers off and watches. Harry attempts to rescue Ilma. Baldwin brings his ship to a stop just over the balloon. Harry, with something bulky over his shoulder descends a rope ladder and works his way along the netting of the balloon to the ring. At this point, Harry sees that there is a chance for success. Shooting with a rifle suspended in front of him, he wounds the Captain. The Captain loses control of his airship and the rope ladder is jerked out of Harry's hand just as he reaches the ring under the balloon. In spite of Ilma's warning, he lowers himself

towards her. As soon as his hand passes the acid-eaten rope it breaks and they fall downward.

In the fall, the bundle over Harry's shoulder opens up and prove to be a parachute. He clings to the rope and Ilma's waist and they both fall into a lake below. Perry, maddened at her escape, dives in his hydroplane, apparently on top of them. As he speeds off over the surface of the water there is no sign of either Harry or Ilma in the foam he leaves behind.

Should Know The Rules.

Ignorance of the rules and regulations of the Food Administration is the plea of many merchants who have been selling excessive quantities of flour and sugar. Others have declared they had received no official notification of the limitations on flour and sugar sales and of the rule requiring an equal amount of other cereals to be sold with every flour purchase.

"I have seen in the papers about these matters," one merchant wrote F. B. Mumford, federal food administrator for Missouri, "but I have not been officially notified that I should follow these rules."

"Ignorance of the rules is no excuse," Mr. Mumford announced recently. "A personal notice to every merchant in the state is not necessary. When new laws are passed, every individual is not notified personally that such laws have been passed and should be obeyed by him."

"The announcement of the new rules and regulations by the Food Administration should be sufficient. No other notice should be necessary. If any retailer is in doubt about any of the regulations he can find out about them easily by consulting his county food administrator."

In the last two weeks the office of the state food administration has been swamped with letters of inquiry, telegrams and telephone messages from merchants and others regarding the new food regulations. As soon as a new regulation is made hundreds of inquiries come pouring in. A bulletin containing all the recent regulations regarding the sale and consumption of food commodities is now being prepared by the state food administration.

Amidst all this fuss and confusion as to exemptions and rejoicing that this one or that one has escaped service, let us not forget the heroic boys, some of them exempt on the score of age, who have volunteered and gone forth in the service of their country. They are entitled to all the honors that can be awarded for a brave and unselfish act. Their records are written so far as the matter of enlistment is concerned and nothing can tarnish that. Let us hope that they will all come back from the war, and with the knowledge of having done their utmost without reserve, a knowledge that in after years they would not trade for great riches.

A Kansas boy in the navy writes home that in a recent storm his ship listed thirty-two degrees on the port side and thirty-three degrees on the starboard side. Let there be an investigation at once to determine what was the cause of the listlessness on the port side which prevented its registering one more degree.